

their similarities and may, as some critics have argued, have come to “mythologize” the twins’ relationship.

Adler, T. (1991, January). Seeing double? *APA Monitor*, 1, 8.

Happiness is a reunited set of twins. (1987, April 13). *U.S. News & World Report*, 63–66.

Rosen, C. M. (1987, September). The eerie world of reunited twins. *Discover*, 36–46.

Segal, N. L. (2000). *Entwined lives: Twins and what they tell us about human behavior*. New York: Penguin.

What we learn from twins. (1998, January 3). *The Economist*, 74–76.

Lecture/Discussion Topic: “Mom Always Liked You Best”

The text suggests that developmental psychology’s biggest puzzle is, “Why are children in the same family so different?” Is it because each sibling has a different combination of genes? Is it because each sibling experiences a different birth order, peer influences, and life events? Judith Dunn has examined certain influences *within* the family that may help explain why people who grow up together, whether or not biologically related, do not have very similar personalities. Dunn notes that the affection, attention, and discipline provided by parents are significantly different for siblings. To illustrate, she cites a contrast in the relationships that 14-month-old Susie and her 30-month-old brother, Andy, have with their mother. Susie is assertive, determined, and a handful for her mother, who is nevertheless delighted by her boisterous daughter. In contrast, Andy is rather timid, cautious, and compliant; at best, he seems to be tolerated by his mother. An exchange between the mother and her children provides insight into these differences. Susie persistently attempts to grab a forbidden object on a high kitchen counter, despite her mother’s repeated objections. Finally, she succeeds, and Andy overhears his mother make a warm, affectionate comment on Susie’s success: “Susie, you *are* a determined little devil!” Andy, sadly, comments to his mother, “*I’m* not a determined little devil!” His mother replies, laughing, “No! What are you? A poor old boy!”

This example not only illustrates differences between siblings’ relationships with their parents but also suggests that children may be extremely sensitive to such differences. Research indicates that from a remarkably early age, children monitor and react to their parents’ interactions with their siblings. In the case cited by Dunn, Andy monitors and responds to his mother’s exchange with his sister, promptly and with a self-comparison. Furthermore, from the end of their first year, children are interested in the behavior of other family members, especially in terms of their emo-

tional exchanges. This perhaps explains the finding that both first-born and second-born children are profoundly affected by their mother’s interactions with the other sibling. For example, children who receive less affection and attention than their siblings are likely to be more worried, anxious, or depressed than children in general. The difference in treatment also affects the quality of the relationship between siblings, with more hostility and conflict found in families with greater differential parental treatment.

Research also suggests that there may be marked differences in how two siblings behave toward each other. In fact, the emerging picture is that in only one-third of sibling pairs do the two children show very similar degrees of affection toward each other. Although there is more reciprocity in terms of hostility, within a pair the relative differences in negative behavior, as well as conduct problems and anxious or depressed behavior, are related to perceived self-competence. For example, one investigation found that the more negative a younger sibling is toward the older, the higher the self-esteem of the younger sibling 3 years later. Dunn notes that these initial findings must be treated with caution until they are replicated, and clearly, no causal inferences can be made from such correlational data.

This is a good topic for small-group or even full-class discussion. Ask students to reflect on their own experiences as family members and how those experiences may have shaped their own personalities, as well as those of their siblings.

Dunn, J. (1992). Siblings and development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1, 6–9.

C. Heritability (pp. 100–101)

Lecture/Discussion Topic: Genetic Influences on Psychological Traits

Thomas Bouchard provides a succinct survey of research findings on how much genes influence human psychological traits. You may want to present his summary in class. Bouchard notes, “There is now a large body of evidence that supports the conclusion that individual differences in most, if not all, reliably measured psychological traits, normal and abnormal, are substantially influenced by genetic factors.” He then breaks down the findings for personality, intelligence, psychological interests, psychiatric illnesses, and social attitudes.

Of special interest is Bouchard’s observation that the early behavior geneticists’ assumption that some psychological traits were likely to be significantly influenced by genetic factors whereas others were likely to be primarily influenced by shared environmental influ-

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

HANDOUT 3C-2

Similarities Questionnaire

	ALIKE	DIFFERENT		ALIKE	DIFFERENT
Politics			Computer brand		
Music			Toothpaste brand		
Religion			Cell phone provider		
Clothes			Favorite online sites		
Jobs held			Favorite magazines		
Job goals			Any special or unusual talents or abilities		
Sports			Pets owned		
Hobbies			Family members (names, ages, interests)		
Favorite school subjects			Favorite types of movies		
Subjects you dislike			TV programs		
Favorite foods			Habits		
Foods you dislike			Personality traits		
Favorite colors			Vacation—activities, preferences		
Regional (climate) preferences			Social preferences (gregarious/reclusive)		
Automobile preferences			Dating status (steady boy/girlfriend)		
Sleeping habits			Handedness		
Reading tastes			Grade point average		
Chewing gum brand			Major illnesses (age of occurrence)		
Aversions (What bugs you?)					

Source: Adapted from a questionnaire by W. Joseph Wyatt.